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U.S. warns backers of terrorism

By Edmond Jacoby
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Nations that "practice terrorism or actively support it cannot be allowed to do so without consequence," the White House said yesterday.

In its most detailed elaboration of a directive signed by President Reagan April 3, the administration said no nation can condone international terrorism and that "it is the right of every legitimate government to resist the use of terrorism against its people, institutions or property by all legal means available."

White House Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes refused to comment on the specific language of the directive, noting that it was a classified document, but he did read a statement prepared by White House security advisers.

Reading from that text, Mr. Speakes said "terrorism is a problem for all nations, and this government will work as closely as possible with other governments . . . to deal with it."

Mr. Speakes said the administration had "reached some conclusions" about how to deal with international terrorism that might include retaliation against terrorists.

But he stopped short of acknowledging aggressive counter-terror actions envisioned in conjunction with the national security directive signed by Mr. Reagan.

He said there was consensus at the White House that "we must take the steps that are necessary to protect our citizens, our institutions and our friends and allies."

The administration's belief in punishing terrorists extends to preemptive attacks and reprisal raids where circumstances warrant — principles articulated by Secretary of State George Shultz in a speech two weeks ago, Mr. Speakes said.

"No administration has been confronted with terrorism to the extent we have," he added.

Mr. Speakes contended the president's decisions on how to combat terrorism represent "a refocused emphasis" rather than a change in policy.

"The thrust of the policy," Mr. Speakes said, "is that the United States could not stand idly by when faced with an increasing threat of terrorist attacks."

The timing of the directive's disclosure could prove awkward for the president, with a controversy brewing in Congress over the role of the CIA in helping Nicaraguan Contras mine that country's harbors — an act some congressmen have termed "terrorism."

But White House spokesman Robert Sims drew a sharp distinction between state-supported terrorism condemned by Mr. Reagan and actions of U.S.-backed anti-Sandinista rebels.

"I think you should remember that those [actions] have been done with full warning in advance that the mines were being placed, there has been no loss of life, and that's

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considerably different from terrorist acts conducted without notification where there's been no declaration of intent," Mr. Sims said.

Sources said the document orders 26 government agencies to recommend specific measures to combat terrorism, and that the administration is preparing to send Congress an extensive package of anti-terrorist legislation.

(The Soviet Union, reacting pre-emptively to an anticipated White House statement late Monday, denounced the directive. The Soviet Union has been accused of supporting numerous terrorist organizations with training, money and arms as a means of destabilizing Western governments and alliances.)
